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ABSTRACT

Research evidence on the effects of schooling continues to demonstrate that schools with effective leadership produce more learning than other schools do. Today's instructional leader must possess skills in the four areas of curriculum development, clinical supervision, staff development, and teacher evaluation. Recent research also reveals a list of teacher and classroom characteristics that most consistently appear to have a close relationship to effective teaching or high achieving schools. These include high teacher expectations of students, frequent monitoring of student progress, routinized classroom management tasks, adequate student time on task, opportunity for students to learn the material on which they are to be tested, appropriate level of difficulty of materials, strong instructional leadership, and favorable learning climate. The instructional leadership model presented here requires principals to focus their efforts on the four instructional leadership skills as they seek to help teachers to improve the eight teacher and classroom characteristics listed. (Author/JM)

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FOCUSING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON IMPROVED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Research evidence on the effects of schooling continues to demonstrate that in some schools effective leadership produces more learning than in other schools. Appropriate leader behavior enhances student achievement. These empirical studies verify our intuition and observations, but one can only speculate as to how many of the nation's building principals actually are effective instructional leaders, in an achievement sense, and how many are not.

This knowledge should compel close attention both to staff development activity and to university training programs. Appropriate leader behavior (mixing concern for goals and people) which uses the existing process skills of instructional improvement (curriculum planning, clinical supervision, staff development, teacher evaluation) must focus on the characteristics of effective teaching if improved achievement is to result. We then have a model, an "if-then..." proposition. It is, quite simply, a way of looking at the general area of leader behavior which gives focus to the tangible tasks of instructional leadership.

General Leadership Behavior

Several years of research and conceptualization have provided the Ohio State Leadership studies (Stoghill)[1], the Managerial Grid (Blake and Mouton)[2], the Leadership Contingency Model (Fiedler)[3], and the Situational Leadership formulation (Hersey and Blanchard)[4]. While each model has its particular nuance, there

is a high degree of similarity in the reliance on two fundamental components crucial to effective leadership. These two components are:

Task behaviors (Goals) - which the leader utilizes to put more structure into the work environment by setting goals, establishing deadlines, clarifying job descriptions, and monitoring a control system.

Relationship behaviors (People) - which the leader employs to motivate people such as praise, criticism, "strokes," and two-way communication. The work of Maslow, Herzburg, and McGregor is important to understand in selecting appropriate relationship behaviors.

Effective leaders are those who most consistently are able to apply the right mix of concern for goals and people - they know when one or the other kind of behavior, or both, is needed. Situational leadership teaches that the leader relies heavily on group maturity as an important determinant of style.[5] Although less well developed, some work has been done by Flanders in refining measures of administrative effectiveness using William Reddin's 3-D theory of managerial effectiveness.

Most of these ways of looking at leader behavior are now well over a decade old, have been submitted to extensive research, are widely taught, and have been used extensively in training sessions for business and industry personnel. While these formulations have greatly increased our understanding of leader behavior, none of them provides sufficient delineation of those particular skills which are required if instructional leadership is to be provided at the site (school building) level.

Specific Instructional Leadership Skills

Today's instructional leader must possess skills in four areas which are prccess skills - these are the tools the principal or supervisor uses to become involved in instructional improvement.

Curriculum development - doing needs assessments, setting goals, selecting content and learning activities (methods), and curriculum evaluation. Knowledge of change strategies including effective group participation and long-range planning skills are essential.

Clinical supervision - engaging in a no-threat planning session with the teacher, developing an observation strategy, observing instruction, and a post observation analysis of the teaching-learning process. Various kinds of systematic classroom observation systems may be used.

Staff development — should be under the direction of the building principal but often is actually delivered by central office leaders or regional service agency people. It must be based on what is known about how adults learn and on both perceived needs of teachers and goals of the school district.* This is very similar to the analysis made by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers[6], who add that after initial inservice sessions

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*My own view as to how one should plan for effective staff development is based on the TIME model:

T - Theory - base training session on some tested theory or conceptualization that is of proven merit; avoid cookbook approaches.

I - Instruction and Interaction - give trainees plenty of time to discuss, raise questions, critique, and share experiences.

M - Modeling - show the trainees the behaviors being sought; use live classes, real people, and videotape or film.

E - Enactment - compels the trainees to actually do the kind of teaching, supervision, evaluation, etc., you are trying to teach them.

with teachers, there must be followup experiences affording teachers the opportunity for feedback on their teaching and coaching for improvement.

Teacher evaluation - most people contend that the primary purpose of teacher evaluation must be for improvement rather than termination, and that is as it should be in most instances. Good teacher evaluation procedures should focus on the characteristics of effective teaching that are drawn from research and experience and minimize attention to long lists of factors unrelated to success in the classroom.

Principals who lack confidence in their skills in these process areas will need assistance in training for improvement. There is nothing terribly difficult about any of them, but they do require knowledge and good human relationship skills. The evidence on how much time principals spend on these process skills now is grim--very typically in the area of 10-20% of the total working hours. Better time management is essential and top administrators must develop a commitment to help reduce the paperwork and "administrivia" which deters principals from providing instructional leadership.

Applying Instructional Leadership to Basic Skill Improvement

In recent years several researchers have concentrated their efforts on helping teachers find ways to improve the basic skills of their elementary school age students.[7] One type of study is referred to as the "effects of schooling" research in which the classroom or school is the focus of the research. Teacher effectiveness research focuses on individual teacher characteristics in examining the relationship of these characteristics to varying levels of student achievement. Finally, some very useful research results have emerged from studies of the psychology of learning.

From these three kinds of research, one could compile a lengthy list of characteristics which at one time or another have been shown to correlate with improved achievement scores in basic skills. What follows, however, is a listing of those characteristics of teachers or classrooms which most consistently appear to have a close relationship to effective teaching or high achieving schools:

1. Teachers have high expectations for students.
2. There is more frequent monitoring of student progress, and teachers actually assure student attention by using techniques to assure all students respond to questioning.
3. Teachers are able to routinize classroom management tasks--they have a "businesslike" or task-oriented behavior but are not repressive.
4. Students spend adequate time on task in basic skill instruction and provision is made for corrective instruction.
5. Students have the opportunity to learn criterion materials; they are taught that material upon which they are to be tested.
6. There is an appropriate level of difficulty of materials; if it is too difficult, teachers must spend too much time explaining.
7. There is a strong instructional leader* at the building who is supportive of teachers and responsive to their needs.

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*It is worth noting that one area in which the literature on leadership is deficient is the concept of charisma. Over the years, it has been apparent to me that, whatever their faults may be, charismatic school leaders take more risks, either use or avoid the bureaucratic routines, and have a "can do" attitude in adapting their school's program to student needs and interest. While some charismatic leaders have produced considerable turmoil, probably far more have left a more responsive program as their legacy. Some wag once said he had finally learned how to get along with his charismatic leader--"He goes his way and I go his." The highly charismatic movie mogul Daryl Zanuck is reported to have once said to a subordinate--"Don't say yes until I finish talking."

8. There is a favorable climate for learning with teachers using praise in moderation and holding a positive regard for students; efforts are made to establish favorable attitudes toward the subject.

These are all factors under the control of the school. There are of course other factors that seem to influence achievement positively, but they are less viable in many communities. Retrospective research involving some 900,000 students reported by University of Colorado researcher Gene Glass reveals that class size does make a difference in learning when incremental reductions in students per class are made to reduce class size below 15 students. There is some evidence that well planned parental participation helps. From my own experience, it seems clear that early childhood education affords many positive developmental results including readiness for reading. However, the eight factors mentioned have the most consistent research support thus far.

A critical issue which immediately arises is whether or not these teacher characteristics are amenable to improvement. For example, what is the efficacy of staff development activities designed to raise teacher expectations for students? According to Sam Kerman,[8] such in-service work did have a positive impact on cognitive growth in achievement. Brophy and Evertson[9] have demonstrated that teachers can be trained to improve classroom management skills, thereby increasing the amount of student time on direct instructional activity. Research of this type on the other factors cited is no doubt also available. This does show how crucial staff development is since simply being aware of the characteristics of effective teaching and classrooms is only a start.

Instructional Leadership Model

Table I depicts this way of looking at instructional leadership. It would have principals focusing their efforts on the four instructional leadership tasks or skills as they seek to help teachers improve instruction in reading and mathematics.

This affords a delineation of skills peculiar to the education profession which are not sufficiently considered in the general leader behavior training frequently employed in business and industry. Because they often have not had sufficient training in these four instructional leadership skills, principals need to have effective staff development experiences if they are to devote increasing amounts of time in this area as opposed to management tasks. Although the usefulness of leadership training is disputed by some,[10] Snyder[11] found that training experiences for 12 elementary school principals in Indiana resulted in significant improvement in teacher-principal rapport.

While it must be obvious that focusing on the eight characteristics of effective teaching is appropriate for basic skill improvement, other observable characteristics should be developed for such fields as art or physical education. Attempting to help teachers in the eight areas discussed, however, seems to offer far more potential for improving achievement than does simply giving more tests which thus far is the most significant component of competency based programs mandated by state legislatures.

TABLE I RESEARCH-BASED FOCUS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

GENERAL LEADER BEHAVIOR SKILLS	SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS SKILLS	RESEARCH-BASED TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS CHARACTERISTICS
Task Behaviors (Goals) Relationship Behaviors (People)	• Curriculum Planning • Clinical Supervision focusing on: • Staff Development • Teacher Evaluation	1. high expectations for students 2. frequent monitoring of student progress 3. routinize classroom management tasks 4. adequate time on task 5. opportunity to learn criterion materials 6. appropriate level of difficulty in materials 7. strong instructional leader 8. favorable climate for learning

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5. Landers, Thomas J., "Administrative Effectiveness--A Comprehensive Behavioral Model," (published paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Detroit, Michigan, March 5, 1979), 25 pp.

6. Joyce, Bruce and Showers, Beverly, "Training Ourselves to Teach: The Messages of Research," (unpublished paper, 9 pp).

7. Much of the important research of this nature is reported in the theme issue: "School Effectiveness, Teacher Effectiveness" in Educational Leadership, (37), (October, 1979)--See also the N.L. Gage article in the November, 1978, issue of the Kappan. An excellent series of articles is also contained in Peterson, Penelope L., and Walberg, Herbert J., eds., Research on Teaching: Concepts, Findings, and Implications (Berkeley, California, McCutchan Publishing Company, 1979), 299 pp.

8. Kerman, Sam, "Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement," Phi Delta Kappan, 60 (June, 1979), pp 716-718.

9. Brophy, Jere E., and Evertson, Carolyn, "Process-Product Correlations in the Texas Teacher Effectiveness Study: Final Report," (Austin, Texas: University of Texas, 1974).

10. See, for example, Sergiovanni, Thomas J., "Is Leadership the Next Great Training Robbery?" Educational Leadership, 36, (March, 1979), pp. 388-394.

11. Snyder, Joyce E., "The Effect of Instructional Leadership In-Service Education For Elementary Principals on Teacher-Principal Rapport" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana State University, 1979).